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## Third Committee

**Summary record of the 50th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 19 November 2003, at 11.30 a.m.

*Chairman*: Ms. Londoño (Vice-Chairman) (Colombia)

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*In the absence of Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon), Ms. Londoño (Colombia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair*

*The meeting was called to order at 11.45 a.m.*

**Agenda item 117: Human rights questions** (*continued*)

**(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms** (*continued*) (A/C.3/58/L.54, L.55, L.58-L.60 and L.62)

*Draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.54: Human rights and terrorism*

1. **Mr. Osmane** (Algeria) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, which had been joined by Bhutan, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Qatar and the United Republic of Tanzania. Modelled on resolution 56/160, it also contained components of Commission on Human Rights resolution 2003/37 and ideas culled from United Nations documents or based on world events. It highlighted the alarming cross-border aspect of terrorism, which profited from technological progress and had proved only a few days before, with the double bombings in Istanbul, that it respected neither walls nor borders and ignored the right to life.

2. Protecting human rights while countering terrorism — a concern shared by the international community — was extensively covered in the draft resolution, which also noted the national, regional and international developments regarding human rights and terrorism, including the global debate and initiatives by the United Nations and regional organizations, as well as by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, as discussed at its 2003 Conference of Heads of State or Government.

3. On the subject of non-State actors, all too often treated dogmatically, the draft resolution wished to be realistic and faithful to the spirit and the letter of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially articles 3 and 30. Despite persistent conceptual differences, the sponsors had, in a spirit of compromise, accepted certain proposed amendments. Consultations would continue to the very end in an effort to reach agreement on contentious issues.

4. Terrorism — a universal problem, as attested to by the geographical diversity of the sponsors — warranted a global response from the United Nations, which should send the clear message that terrorism, or safe haven for its perpetrators, could never be justified. Hence, in a spirit of solidarity with the victims of terrorism and their families, the sponsors hoped for a broad consensus in favour of what was a universal, balanced, unambiguous and extremely topical draft resolution.

*Draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.55: National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights*

5. **Ms. Tomar** (India), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, joined by Cyprus, Ecuador, France, Honduras, Italy, New Zealand, Panama, Slovakia, Slovenia, Thailand and the United Kingdom had also become sponsors. She read out two minor corrections of the text.

6. National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights had emerged over the years as an important instrument in a growing number of countries in all regions. The General Assembly, in resolution 48/134, had adopted the Principles relating to the status of such institutions, which provided the framework for their establishment and envisaged plurality, independence, freedom of operation and a broad-based mandate and powers to protect human rights. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, for its part, had helped establish or strengthen such institutions in some 30 countries. She hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

7. **The Chairman** announced that the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Kenya, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and South Africa had also joined the sponsors.

*Draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.58: Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*

8. **Mr. Næss** (Norway), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, joined by Spain, commended the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Human Rights Defenders on her contribution to the improvement of their protection worldwide. Some of the concerns expressed in her report (A/58/380) were highlighted in the draft resolution. He thanked colleagues who had participated

in the informal discussions or submitted comments on the text, which he hoped would be adopted without a vote.

9. **The Chairman** announced that Albania, Bulgaria, Ecuador, Honduras, Mauritius and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had joined the list of sponsors.

*Document A/C.3/58/L.59, containing amendments to draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.30/Rev.1: The situation of and assistance to Israeli children*

10. **Ms. Khalil** (Egypt), introducing the document on behalf of the sponsors of the proposed amendments to draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.30/Rev.1, said that the printed version just distributed contained a technical error. Instead of "The situation of and assistance to Israeli children", the title of the document should read "The situation of and assistance to children in the Middle East region". She added that a corrigendum would be issued.

11. **The Chairman** announced that Indonesia had joined the list of sponsors of document A/C.3/58/L.59.

*Draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.60: Access to medication in the context of pandemics such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria*

12. **Mr. Meyer** (Brazil) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, joined by Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, the Congo, Croatia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Lesotho, Lithuania, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, the Niger, Nigeria, the Philippines, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tunisia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It was inspired by Brazil's national experience concerning free and universal access to medication, including antiretroviral therapy. The draft resolution highlighted the notion that access to medication in the context of pandemics such as HIV/AIDS was a fundamental element for achieving the full realization of the right of everyone to the highest attainable level of physical and mental health. New elements had been included in the text based on recent developments. He hoped that the draft resolution could be adopted by consensus in a clear sign of the international community's commitment to win the battle against pandemics.

*Draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.62: United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, 1995-2004*

13. **Ms. Bieske** (Australia) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, joined by Albania, Angola, Armenia, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Ghana, Guatemala, Kenya, Lebanon, Lithuania, Madagascar, Morocco, Mozambique, Panama, the Philippines, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Serbia and Montenegro, Sierra Leone, South Africa, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America and Zambia. The text of the draft resolution, which had been submitted every year since the start of the Decade, had been significantly streamlined in keeping with the aim of ensuring efficiency, but the focus remained on highlighting and supporting the Decade as a mechanism to promote and facilitate human rights education as a key element in the full realization of human rights.

*Draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.47: Strengthening United Nations action in the field of human rights through the promotion of international cooperation and the importance of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity*

14. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to take action on the draft resolution, which had no programme budget implications, and announced that Benin, Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Malawi, Mauritius, Qatar, Swaziland and Turkmenistan had joined the sponsors. He took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

15. *Draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.47 was adopted.*

16. **Ms. Groux** (Switzerland), speaking in explanation of position on behalf of Australia, Canada, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Norway and her own country, said that for some time there had been discussions on the need to rationalize the agenda of the General Assembly. All delegations should take responsibility for making their work more focused and should examine whether the resolutions they sponsored were necessary and whether they needed to be considered so frequently. The text of draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.47 was virtually identical to that adopted in 2002 and the delegations she represented had requested

its sponsors to consider amending the text to reflect that it should be considered on a biennial basis. The suggestion had not been accepted, but it was to be hoped that the sponsors would consider whether the resolution could merit less frequent attention by the Committee in the future.

17. **Mr. Amorós Núñez** (Cuba) said that his delegation had taken note of the statement by the representative of Switzerland and hoped that similar suggestions would be made with regard to other draft resolutions that had been presented for many years, in a spirit of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity. He also hoped that it represented a serious intent to improve human rights collaboration and had not merely singled out the draft resolution sponsored by Cuba.

18. **Ms. Groux** (Switzerland) assured the representative of Cuba that the suggestion approached the issue comprehensively and had been made in a constructive spirit. The same recommendation had already been proposed during the negotiation and presentation of other draft resolutions.

*The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.*